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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

SPOT COMMENTARY

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Opposition Preparing For General Strike On Monday

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) called yesterday for a campaign of widespread civil disobedience and the boycott of all state institutions starting on Monday. DOS official Vuk Obradovic told a rally of 5,000 supporters in Belgrade on Saturday that "there will be no more big speeches or rallies," urging everyone to participate in the effort to force the regime to recognize the first round victory of Vojislav Kostunica.

- Since Friday, opposition supporters, independent media operators, and workers throughout Serbia have held sporadic protests, staged walkouts, and set up roadblocks in advance of the general strike planned for 2 October.
- In the most serious action yet, a protest by seven thousand workers at Serbia's Kolubara coal mine has severely curtailed production, threatening to plunge the country into darkness, according to press reports. The operation is the only supplier to the nearby Nikola Tesla power plant, which produces half of Serbia's electricity.

Milosevic Remains Defiant

FRY President Milosevic shows no signs that he intends to step down and appears determined to hold a second round of elections, even if it risks a violent showdown with the opposition. On Saturday, Milosevic rejected Russian President Putin's offer to mediate the election dispute, while the pro-regime Federal Electoral Commission officially dismissed the opposition's complaint over the tabulation of the first round results, according to press accounts.

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Putin Turns Up The Heat

Two Russian diplomats arrived in Belgrade on Sunday and the opposition media reportedly claimed they warned Milosevic not to use force to remain in power, according to press

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reports. The Russians immediately denied making such a statement.

- Putin, however, released a joint statement with German Chancellor Schroeder hours later proclaiming that "the victory by Kostunica reflects the will of the Serbian people for a democratic change," according to press reports. [redacted]

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